

Naval War College Review

Volume 30
Number 3 *Summer*

Article 14

1977

Navies and Foreign Policy

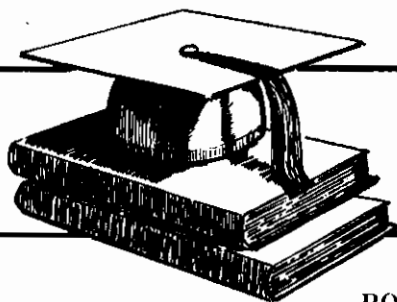
B.M Simpson III

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Simpson, B.M III (1977) "Navies and Foreign Policy," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 30 : No. 3 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol30/iss3/14>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.



PROFESSIONAL READING

BOOK REVIEWS

Booth, Ken. *Navies and Foreign Policy*. New York: Crane, Russak, 1977. 281pp.

Why do we need a navy? Traditionally the answer has been, at least according to the views of Mahan and other writers in the classic school, to fight other navies. In 1945 this question was asked again, with the clear implication that since the Japanese Navy was no longer a threat we did not need a navy ourselves. Today the Soviet Navy is our chief rival at sea. If the U.S. and Soviet navies fight each other, the conflict will probably not be limited to the sea and in all likelihood it will escalate to a major nuclear exchange. At least Soviet military doctrine says as much. Thus, it could be argued that the U.S. Navy as it is presently constituted is really an expensive and possibly an unnecessary form of insurance.

"Why do we need a navy?" opens this lucid and most important study of the functions of navies since Sir Julian Corbett wrote *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. Booth notes that there are many tools to help us think about the unthinkable, but that there are few tools, indeed, to help us think about the thinkable uses of modern naval power. He then skillfully proceeds to develop and to discuss several useful tools.

States use the sea primarily for three major purposes: (1) The passage of goods and people, (2) the passage of military forces for diplomatic and combat purposes, and (3) the exploitation of resources in or under the sea. Navies are a means to achieve these purposes.

Navies have three major roles: (1) The Military Role—balance of power functions and employment of force to achieve objectives; (2) the Diplomatic Role—negotiation from strength, manipulation and prestige; and (3) the Policing Role—coast guard responsibilities and nation-building tasks such as internal stability and development. These roles and their supporting analyses are particularly useful tools, because they avoid the confines of strict adherence to the traditional concept that navies are useful only to fight other navies. Thus, they are a good starting place to begin study of the uses of naval power in the modern world. They take into account the salient features of the modern world: the danger of nuclear war; the rise of new states, many of which are characterized by political and social instability; the emerging maritime regime as seen in the U.N. Conference on the Law of the Sea; and the political rivalries which continue despite changes in the international system.

These roles are not only useful tools for study and analysis in general, but they have particular merit for U.S. naval officers because they avoid the "missions of the navy" as descriptive categories. Recently the Navy had four "missions"—strategic deterrence, sea control, projection and naval presence. More recently these "missions" have become "functions" and instead of four, there are now two: sea control and projection of power. This is not to say that these "missions" or "functions" do not have their own utility, particularly

for budget formulation. However, they should not be confused with operational roles.

Budget formulation, analysis and administration require specific categories of military activity, which frequently have little practical relationship to the use of military force in actual combat. By the nature of bureaucracy and bureaucratic politics many observers fail to recognize or to admit that the categories of the Navy "missions" are essentially semantic and administrative conveniences necessitated by our form and method of government. They confuse these categories with the realities of combat and the employment of naval forces, which are the same for any nation using military power. However, bureaucratic and procedural matters and methods will vary for each nation. Confusion of administrative convenience with the realities of combat can only set the stage for frustration, bad thinking and consequent error. Booth's analysis is a useful antidote for such confusion.

In Part I, Booth discusses "Naval Diplomacy," "Navies and Prestige" and in a later chapter he shows how navies are not only executors of foreign policy, but they are also influences upon it. In a chapter on the types of navies, Booth distinguishes global, oceangoing, contiguous sea and coastal navies by showing how the different types of navies are related to the specific circumstances and needs of the respective governments maintaining them. This distinction is a novel and refreshing change from the classic theory (not surprisingly developed in the United States and Great Britain) that navies must seek command of the sea. This classic or Blue Water theory had nothing to offer smaller navies which were unable to achieve command of the sea for one reason or another. In the shadow of this theory the French developed the *Jeune École* and Tirpitz his risk theory, neither of which proved to be very successful.

Then in Part II Booth discusses the permanently operating factors. In his discussion of naval capabilities, he identifies the "technical, physical, doctrinal and human variables related to the potential or actual operational performance of the units of naval power." In so doing he asks specific questions and points to specific items that will provide a more complete and detailed evaluation than one normally finds in what passes for analysis. In this respect his analysis is similar to, but more sophisticated, because it is more complete, than that provided by Admiral Turner in his recent article in *Foreign Affairs*.

Domestic sources of naval policy are also considered. Booth admits that it is easier to say domestic factors affect foreign policy than it is to identify precise linkages. Still, he identifies and discusses the "internal variables which affect the general size, effort and character of a country's military policy in general and naval effort in particular." This chapter on the roots and internal influences on naval policy is particularly illuminating.

Booth's concluding chapter is a brilliant discussion of the international context in which naval policy either succeeds or fails. He seeks the "sources of order and disorder at sea" in his discussion of the utility of navies in the context of contemporary technological, social, political and legal developments—the facts of life in the international system.

To those who subscribe to the fashionable position that military and naval forces have lost much of their utility, Booth points out "Military hesitation and scruple are decidedly Western phenomena: even here, however, the utility of armed forces has not been undermined to the extent that it has become fashionable to suppose." In cautioning against throwing the baby out with the bath water, he adds an important qualification, "As with armed forces in

136 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

general, naval strategy in the modern world is less concerned with contributing to victory in war than with furthering national interests short of war." This is a point naval planners are apt to forget.

The conclusion of this remarkable book is essentially good news: "The historic naval powers have had to adjust and are in the process of adjusting their thinking to the new circumstances." Booth shows how some adjustments have already been made and he provides us with the tools to make additional necessary adjustments.

He writes clearly, concisely and to the point. He avoids trendy phrases and words, which frequently confuse more than they enlighten. No naval officer and no student of international politics should ignore this incisive and thought-provoking study. One can only hope that the leadership of the U.S. Navy will read and study it, along with the responsible political leaders. They ignore it at our peril.

B.M. SIMPSON III
Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy
Naval War College

Denton, Jeremiah A., Jr. with Ed Brandt. *When Hell was in Session*. New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976. 235pp.

Secretary of Defense McNamara was aboard the U.S.S. *Independence* on 18 July 1965 when Commander Denton led 28 A6 Intruders to bomb a cluster of warehouses on the south bank of the Ma River. On a previous strike five planes had been shot down over this heavily defended area. As Denton led the flight in and released his bombs a seemingly light hit knocked out the plane's airbrakes. As he pulled it softly out of its dive a second hit knocked out all controls. In slamming the rudder to keep the plane level he snapped a tendon in his left thigh. He and his bombardier-navigator ejected from the

plane and Denton landed in the river where he hoped to escape by swimming downstream under water. However, his painful left leg was useless and he was quickly captured by North Vietnamese soldiers who followed him down the bank. He was destined to spend nearly 7½ years in prison, 4 of them in solitary confinement.

Hanoi broadcast that Denton and his flight had been personally sent on its mission by McNamara to bomb civilians and the captured airmen would be treated as imperialist war criminals. Although North Vietnam had signed the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war it evaded the Convention's code of decency through the fraudulent blanket charge of American imperialism. As the crippled Denton was brought into Hao Lo prison he was welcomed by the strains of Yankee Doodle whistled from one of the cells and he knew there were courageous countrymen on hand. Labeled the Hanoi Hilton this full city block compound was eventually to hold some 700 American prisoners before the war ended.

Although Denton was the first A6 pilot captured, his jailers made no attempt to get military information from him but pressed hard for statements they considered of propaganda value. They tried to get him to say that McNamara had ordered him to bomb civilians and in their obsession with this charge he sensed the North Vietnamese greatly feared bombing attacks. As the war with its bombings continued the Hanoi Hilton and its related prison camps became a battlefield where the captors relentlessly strove to break the spirit of their prisoners, using increasingly cruel bodily tortures in the process.

The backbone of prisoner resistance was the Code of Conduct issued as an Executive Order by President Eisenhower in August of 1955. This code stresses the necessity of a chain of